

CLAIMS OF THE INVENTION

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I CLAIM:

1. A food preparation appliance comprising a base unit and a container in which food to be prepared is placed, said container including a base and at least one upwardly extending wall, said base and at least one wall defining an interior of said container, a helical blade positioned in said interior of said container for moving material placed in the container, said base unit including an inductive heating element, said inductive heating element positioned below a generally planar support on which said container may be placed and said base unit including a rotational drive mechanism, said rotational drive mechanism adapted to rotate said helical blade.

2. The food preparation appliance in accordance with Claim 1 including a swiping blade positioned radially outward of said helical blade and rotatable with said helical blade, said swiping blade engaging said at least one upwardly extending wall.

3. The food preparation appliance in accordance with Claim 1 wherein said rotational drive mechanism comprises a motor driving a drive element, said drive element having an aperture therein for accepting an end of a spindle, said spindle coupled to said helical blade.

4. The food preparation appliance in accordance with Claim 1 wherein said generally planar support has an aperture therein through which a drive element connecting said helical blade and rotational drive mechanism may extend.

5. The food preparation appliance in accordance with Claim 1 wherein said base unit includes a controller controlling the operation of said induction heating unit and said rotational drive mechanism.

6. A method of preparing food with a food preparation appliance including a base unit including an inductive heating unit and a container having a mixing blade located therein comprising:

accepting user input regarding a speed of said mixing blade;

accepting user input regarding a level of heating to be provided with said heating unit;

rotating said mixing blade within said container in accordance with said selected speed; and

heating said container with said inductive heating unit in accordance with said selected level of heating.

7. The method in accordance with Claim 6 wherein said food preparation appliance includes a thermistor and including the steps of providing container temperature data and adjusting said heating of said container based upon said temperature data.

8. The method in accordance with Claim 6 wherein said food preparation appliance includes a memory storing a plurality of mixing blade speed and heating level information data sets, and wherein said steps of accepting user input comprise accepting an input regarding a selection of one of said information data sets.

9. The method in accordance with Claim 6 wherein said food preparation appliance includes a memory and said steps of accepting user input comprise transferring blade speed and heating level information to said memory.

10. The method in accordance with Claim 9 wherein said step of transferring comprises sending said information over a telecommunication link from a remote source to said memory.

11. The method in accordance with Claim 9 wherein said step of transferring comprises reading said information from a printed card.

12. A food preparation appliance comprising:

a pot, said pot having a base and an upwardly extending wall forming a generally circular periphery;

a helical blade located in said pot, said helical blade mounted to a first end of a spindle, a second end of said spindle connected to a first end of a connecting rod, a second end of said connecting rod extending outwardly from said base of said pot;

a swiping blade connected to said helical blade, said swiping blade located radially outward of said helical blade and engaging an inner surface of said wall of said pot;

a base unit, said base unit including a housing supporting a mounting ring, a plate supported by said mounting ring, said plate having an aperture therein through which said connecting rod extends when said pot is placed on a top surface of plate, an inductive heating element positioned adjacent a bottom surface of said plate, a motor in driving

relation with a drive member, said drive member including a recessed portion for accepting a mating portion of said second end of said connecting rod, and a control unit, said control unit including one or more controls for accepting input from a user, said control unit operably associated with said motor for controlling said motor and said inductive heating element for controlling the operation of said heating element.

13. The food preparation appliance in accordance with Claim 12 wherein said motor has an output shaft with a driving gear thereon and said drive member has a driven gear connected thereto which is driven by said driving gear.

14. The food preparation appliance in accordance with Claim 12 wherein said housing defines a control panel and one or more of said controls are located at said control panel.

15. The food preparation appliance in accordance with Claim 12 wherein a frame having a top portion and a bottom portion extends from said helical blade, said swiping blade connected to said frame.

16. The food preparation appliance in accordance with Claim 15 wherein said bottom portion of said frame includes a slot for accepting a first end of said blade and said top portion of said frame includes an aperture for accepting a fastener connecting a second end of said blade thereto.

17 The food preparation appliance in accordance with Claim 12 wherein said helical blade has a top end having a passage there through and including a nut, said nut having a threaded portion for extending through said passage into engagement with said first end of said spindle whereby said helical blade is removably connected to said spindle.

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